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SUBJECT: BULGARIA'S NEW EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER NOMINEE

Classified By: DCM Susan Sutton for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (SBU) Prime Minister Boyko Borissov named Kristalina Georgieva as Bulgaria's candidate for European Commissioner following the withdrawal of former Foreign Minister Rumiana Jeleva as Commissioner-designate on January 19. Georgieva's Development Committee hearing will take place on February 3 and the European Parliament (EP) will vote on February 9. Our Sofia-based contacts tell us that European Commission President Manuel Barroso does not plan to change the portfolio for the new Bulgarian commissioner-designate, which includes International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response. Georgieva says she is confident she will be ready for her hearing given her experience in social development and crisis management.

¶2. (SBU) Georgieva, 56, became Vice President and Corporate Secretary of the World Bank in 2008. She is the first and only Bulgarian at such a senior position in the organization.

In this position, she facilitated cooperation and strategic dialog between the Bank's Boards of Directors and its senior management. With the World Bank since 1993, Georgieva has held a number of technical and managerial positions in bank operations and was a leading voice on environmental and sustainable development issues. Prior to joining the World Bank, she held a range of academic and consulting positions in Bulgaria, the United Kingdom, and the United States. She has lectured on economic development topics at MIT, Harvard, and other universities around the world. She is the author of one of the most popular Bulgarian-language textbooks on microeconomics and receives rave reviews from her former students.

¶3. (C) Comment: Georgieva was Borissov's ace in the hole. Borissov had been trying to lure the World Bank executive into his cabinet ever since he swept into power in July 2009, so Georgieva's decision to finally join the GERB team is a win for Brussels, Bulgaria, and Borissov himself. But with Georgieva in Brussels, Borissov's trump card has been played. Now he has few (if any) additional cadre who are ready for the big time in case of needed future cabinet changes at home.

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